

# REPORT

**DATE:** May 8, 2008

**TO:** Transportation and Communications Committee

**FROM:** Naresh Amatya, Acting Manager, Transportation Planning  
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**SUBJECT:** Truck Climbing Lanes in Coachella Valley

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S APPROVAL:**



## RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Recommend inclusion of the proposed truck climbing lanes, on I-10 near Chiraco Summit and Blythe areas in Coachella Valley, in the Strategic Plan of the 2008 RTP.

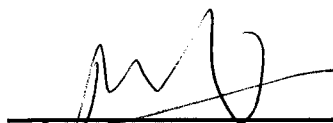
## BACKGROUND:

As part of the comments on the Draft 2008 RTP, SCAG has received a request from the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG) to include plans for Truck Climbing Lanes, on I-10, near the Chiraco Summit and Blythe areas, be included in the Strategic Plan of the 2008 RTP. This is a new project that is not included in any of SCAG's planning or programming documents. SCAG Staff has reviewed the information provided by CVAG in support of this project. Based on the preliminary review of the information provided, staff supports proposed request to include this project in the Strategic Plan of the 2008 RTP.


## FISCAL IMPACT:

None.

Reviewed by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Division Manager

Reviewed by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Department Director

Reviewed by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Financial Officer

## **2008 Regional Transportation Plan Comments from CVAG**

**To:** Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)  
**From:** Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG)  
**Date:** February 19, 2008  
**Subject:** Comments to the SCAG 2008 RTP

As a SCAG subregion, CVAG has carefully reviewed the draft 2008 RTP released by SCAG for public comments. CVAG staff has attended the SCAG sponsored RTP workshops and participated in the many RTP presentations and reviews over the past few months. CVAG realizes the importance of this document, to provide a framework for the future development of our regional transportation system.

The collective projects identified in the RTP document are a collaborative and comprehensive plan, addressing the transportation needs of the region for the next 20 years. After careful review of all segments of the draft RTP Plan, CVAG has some serious comments to discuss, and requests for inclusion in the Plan.

The CVAG subregion is a fast growing area of Southern California, with major development of affordable residential housing, expanding employment centers, and continually expanding tourist destination resorts. CVAG would like to see more emphasis on the importance of the CVAG jurisdictions as an expanding population center for the region, included in the Plan.

With the many approved CVAG and Coachella Valley RTIP, RTP and Arterial Projects submitted by the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) for the growing CVAG areas, we have identified an RTIP project that has been left out. In the city of Indian Wells, west city limits to Cook Street, widen from four to six lanes, by 2012, with a cost of \$1,082,000. Please add this project to the corrected RTP Plan.

CVAG, working with SCAG Compass staff, held many workshops and presentations for the planning staffs, electeds, and city managers from CVAG jurisdictions. Careful consideration was given to reviewing growth data and developing a technically accurate and acceptable baseline forecast for the CVAG subregion. CVAG is very concerned with SCAG discussions of intent to adjust and manipulate the approved baseline forecast, to a "policy" forecast. With the "policy" forecast, thousands of Riverside County's expected population growth would be shown as population numbers, residing in the coastal communities of Southern California. As we are all aware, affordable residential housing is readily available in the CVAG subregion, and in other areas of Riverside County, but the housing costs in the coastal communities is prohibitive, and affordable for only the very wealthy. The "policy" forecast plan concerns CVAG greatly, along with the consequences of transportation funds inappropriately transferred to coastal areas, taking away from Riverside County, where the actual growth is taking place.

Correct and accurate airport information needs to be added to the RTP. Specifically, the CVAG subregion has the Palm Springs International Airport, located in the city of Palm Springs, along with the General Aviation Airports located in the eastern areas of Riverside County, east of the Coachella Valley. Airports are located in Thermal, Blythe, Chiraco Summit, and Desert Center.

To the Riverside County Strategic Plan Projects, CVAG is requesting the addition of two projects that we have been assured by SCAG, would be included in the 2008 RTP. The Palm Springs International Airport must be added to the High Speed Rail connections of the other Southern California major airports. With a population that will reach one million in the next twenty years, and as a major tourist destination, the Palm Springs International Airport must be included in the High Speed Rail plans.

CVAG is requesting plans for Truck Climbing Lanes, on I-10, near the Chiraco Summit and Blythe areas, be included in the 2008 RTP. We are all aware of the volume of trucks involved with goods movement in these areas, and the serious accidents caused by trucks slowing automobile traffic in this segment of I-10, east of the Coachella Valley, in eastern Riverside County.

Please add these additions and corrections to the 2008 RTP, to help make this a complete and accurate document.